CORRESPONDENCE

WITH

THE MINISTER FROM THE UNITED STATES

RESPECTING

THE NAVIGATION LAWS.

Presented to the House of Commons by Command of Her Majesty.
1848.

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Correspondence with the Minister from the United States respecting the Navigation Laws.

No. 1.

Mr. Bancroft to Viscount Palmerston.

American Legation, November 3, 1847.

THE Undersigned, Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary of the United States of America, has the honour to inquire of Viscount Palmerston, Her Britannic Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, if Her Majesty's Government is inclined to remove existing restrictions on international commerce.

Universal reciprocity, in the widest sense, is held by the American Government as the only thoroughly appropriate basis for intercourse between two great nations. The prohibition of the indirect trade has but restrained enterprise; it has done good to neither country. To abrogate it would at once set free dormant commercial wealth, without injuring any one.

Should Her Majesty's Government entertain similar views, the Undersigned is prepared, on the part of the American Government, to propose that British ships may trade from any port in the world to any port in the United States, and be received, protected, and in respect to charges and duties, treated like American ships; if reciprocally, American ships may in like manner trade from any port of the world to any port under the dominion of Her Britannic Majesty.

The removal of commercial restrictions, while it would be of mutual advantage to the material interests of both countries, could not but give openings to still further relations of amity between them; and by its influence on the intercourse of nations, create new guarantees for the peace of the world.

The Undersigned, &c.

(Signed) GEORGE BANCROFT.

No. 2.

Viscount Palmerston to Mr. Bancroft.

Sir, *Foreign Office, November* 17, 1847.

I HAVE lost no time in communicating to my colleagues your note of the 3rd instant, on the subject of the Navigation Laws which regulate the commerce of the British Empire and that of the United States with each other.

This question had already engaged the serious attention of Her Majesty's Ministers; and we observe with pleasure that the sentiments which we entertain with regard to it, are shared by the Government of a country with which we are so closely united by the ties of an extensive commerce and of a common origin.

We do not however think that we should be justified in advising the Crown to enter into engagements which would be at variance with some of the most important principles of the existing Navigation Law, without the previous sanction of Parliament; but it is our intention to propose to Parliament, without unnecessary delay, measures which would enable us to place our commercial intercourse in regard to the matters to which your note refers, on the most liberal and comprehensive basis with respect to all countries which shall be willing to act in a corresponding spirit towards us.

I am, &c.

(Signed) PALMERSTON.

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